WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a first electronic text communication;

processing the first electronic text communication with an algorithm to produce a first fingerprint;

beginning a time period for the first electronic text communication;

receiving a second electronic text communications;

processing the second electronic text communications with the algorithm to produce a second fingerprint;

comparing the first fingerprint to the second fingerprint to determine if the first electronic text communication is similar to the second electronic text communication;

updating a count for the first electronic text communication based upon the comparing step; and

determining if the count during the time period reaches a first threshold.

2. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 1, further comprising a step of filtering subsequent electronic text communications similar to the first electronic text communication.

3. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 1, wherein the first listed processing step comprises a step of calculating a histogram where counts are determined for words in the first electronic text communication.

4. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 1, further comprising steps of:

determining if a character count of the first electronic text communication exceeds a second threshold; and

choosing a fingerprint algorithm based upon the step of determining if the character count of the first electronic text communication exceeds the second threshold.

5. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 1, wherein a match is determined from the comparing step even if the first fingerprint and the second fingerprint differ by a percentage.

6. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 1, further comprising steps of:

determining network addresses for the first and second electronic text communications; and

modifying the first threshold based upon the step of determining network addresses.

7. A method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk, the method comprising steps of:

receiving an electronic text communication;

processing the electronic text communication with an algorithm to produce a fingerprint;

beginning a time period associated with the electronic text communication;

receiving a plurality of electronic text communications;

processing the plurality electronic text communications with the algorithm to produce a plurality of fingerprints;

comparing the plurality of fingerprints to the fingerprint in order to determine how many of the plurality of electronic text communications are similar to the electronic text communication;

counting an amount of the plurality of electronic text communications that are similar to the electronic text communication; and

determining if the amount during the time period reaches a first threshold.

8. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 7, further comprising a step of filtering subsequent electronic text communications similar to the electronic text communication.

9. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 7, wherein the first listed processing step comprises a step of calculating a histogram where counts are determined for words in the electronic text communication.

10. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 7, further comprising steps of:

determining if a character count of the electronic text communication exceeds a second threshold; and

choosing a fingerprint algorithm based upon the step of determining if the character count of the electronic text communication exceeds the second threshold.

11. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 7, wherein the electronic text communication is chosen from a group consisting of a chat room comment, an instant message, a newsgroup posting, an electronic forum posting, a message board posting, and a classified advertisement.

12. The method for detecting electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 7, further comprising steps of:

determining network addresses for the electronic text communication and each of the subset; and

modifying the first threshold based upon the step of determining network addresses.

13. A method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk, the method comprising steps of:

receiving an electronic text communication;

generating a fingerprint indicative of the electronic text communication;

beginning a time period in relation to the first listed receiving step;

receiving a plurality of electronic text communications;

generating a plurality of fingerprints corresponding to the plurality of electronic text communications;

determining a subset of the plurality of electronic text communications that are similar to the electronic text communication;

counting a size of the subset;

determining if the size during the time period reaches a first threshold; and

filtering subsequent electronic text communications similar to the electronic text communication.

14. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 13, wherein the first listed generating step comprises a step of calculating a histogram where counts are determined for words in the electronic text communication.

15. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 13, further comprising a step of removing non-textual information from the electronic text communication.

16. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 13, further comprising a step of determining if a character count of the electronic text communication exceeds a second threshold.

17. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 16, further comprising a step of choosing a fingerprint algorithm based upon the step of determining if the character count of the electronic text communication exceeds the second threshold.

18. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 13, wherein the electronic text communication is chosen from a group consisting of a chat room comment, an instant message, a newsgroup posting, an electronic forum posting, a message board posting, and a classified advertisement.

19. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 13, further comprising a step of removing everything from the electronic text communication except a message body.

20. The method for blocking electronic text communication distributed in bulk as recited in claim 13, further comprising steps of:

determining network addresses for the electronic text communication and each of the subset; and

modifying the first threshold based upon the step of determining network addresses.